



Florida House of Representatives

Representative Alan B. Williams
Deputy Democratic Whip
District 8

Committee:
State Affairs

Subcommittees:
Energy & Utilities
Government Operations
Higher Education Appropriations

February 10, 2011

The Honorable Dean Cannon, Speaker
Florida House of Representatives
404 South Monroe Street, 420 Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

The Honorable Mike Haridopolos, Senate President
Florida Senate
404 South Monroe Street, 409 Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

Dear Speaker Cannon and Senate President Haridopolos:

Members of the United States Congress made an important declaration when, for the State of the Union address, they elected to ignore party lines and sit with members of a party different than their own. That declaration, that it is time to put differences aside and instead work together to unite a nation, is one that we should follow, as well. Just as the members of Congress are our leaders, whose example we are meant to follow, so are we the leading examples in our respective communities and for the State of Florida.

As we welcome New Members to the State Legislature and unite for the first Session under new leadership, it is important to remember that we are colleagues, not enemies. Though we are elected as Republican or Democrat, we are all dedicated to the same goal, though the means by which we pursue that goal may differ. We must send the message to the state of Florida that cooperation, not division, is the method by which that goal is attained.

In that spirit, mixed seating during the State of the State would encourage members to ignore party lines and instead focus on important issues regarding legislation. It would allow us to change the tone of political discourse in the state, and regain confidence of the citizens of Florida. As the House Speaker and Senate President, I hope the legacy that you leave is that you encouraged legislators to put aside their differences so that they might work together in the manner that best serves Florida and its citizens. I think the introduction of mixed seating at the State of the State would be one way by which that might be achieved, and I hope you consider this request.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized blue ink signature of Alan B. Williams, written over the word "Sincerely,".

Alan B. Williams